

-5-

REMARKS

Claims 10-12, 15-17, 19 and 22 were rejected in an Office Action dated October 24, 2006. Claims 10, 19 and 22 have been amended, and new claims 23 and 24 have been added. Support for the amendments and new claims may be found in the "Detailed Description of the Invention." Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the following remarks.

Claims 10, 11 and 15-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chikamori (JP 06-047363). Furthermore, claims 19 and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chikamori (JP 06-047363). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Moreover, claims 2 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Chikamori. (JP 06-047363). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As noted in previous communications, Chikamori is directed to a device for covering landfill material which prevents, or insulates, the landfill material from anaerobic decomposition which causes odor and contaminates groundwater. Chikamori's construction is a water barrier sheet with patches, or windows, of air permeable material. The construction is described as beneficial for insulating the landfill material from precipitation and preventing anaerobic decomposition, while the regions of air permeable material allow gases to diffuse into the air.

Chikamori neither discloses nor suggest the presently claimed aerobic treatment system and method of aerobic treatment. Specifically, the Chikamori invention is described as a water barrier sheet for landfilling, which process is very different from aerobic treatment. In contrast to a landfill operation, aerobic treatment involves creating a controlled environment within the system where the components of the system are used to control moisture and air flow to induce degradation of biodegradable materials. Chikamori's invention does not provide a system where conditions are created to induce aerobic treatment and degradation of the underlying material. Applicants submit that the construction of Chikamori, while it may have some regions with components having similar chemical and structural composition to the applicants laminate covers, the materials of Chikamori are limited by their overall structure and cannot perform the same functions as applicants' claimed invention. The limitations of the water barrier sheets described by Chikamori, wherein patches or regions of a porous

-6-

film having air permeable reinforcing sheets laminated to both surfaces thereof are bonded to the water barrier sheet, would not create adequate conditions within the material being covered to induce aerobic degradation as described by applicants. In contrast, the novel features of applicants claimed inventions provide improved systems and methods which enhance aerobic treatment and decomposition of biodegradable materials within the system. Accordingly, applicants submit that the structure of Chikamori is different from that of the claimed invention and does not read on any of the present claims.

Accordingly, applicants submit that Chikamori does not anticipate, disclose or suggest the claimed aerobic treatment systems for aerobic treatment of biodegradable material of the present invention. Moreover, applicants submit that the arguments also support the novelty of newly presented method claims 23 and 24. Specifically, Chikamori does not anticipate, disclose or suggest the claimed methods for aerobic treatment of biodegradable material of the present invention.

III. Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, the present invention as defined by claims 10-12, 15-17, 19 and 22-24 is neither taught nor suggested by any of the references of record. Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that these claims are now in form for allowance. If further questions remain, applicants request that the Examiner telephone applicants' undersigned representative before issuing a further Office Action.

Respectfully submitted,

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